

John 14.15-31 Sermon / COB / 01.25.15

Introduction

- † **[Slide 1: title]** We will begin in John 14.15, if you want to turn there in your Bible.
- † **[Slide 2: love languages]** While you are turning, let me ask, how many of you have heard of the five love languages? The idea is that people sense love in different ways: through physical touch, gifts, quality time, affirming words, and acts of service.
- The key is to realize how each person most senses love in each type of relationship, so you can offer that kind of love. For example, I might buy LeeAnn lots of gifts, but if her primary love language is quality time and I neglect to spend quality time with her, then she will not feel loved no matter how much I buy. On the other hand, if I spend lots of quality time with her, I don't have to buy her many gifts, and she will feel loved anyway. Knowing this saves me a lot of money! I mean, it helps me to meet LeeAnn's needs...
 - There also are "dialects" within each language. For example, LeeAnn and I both sense love through quality time, but for her that can be any activity we do alone together, even something non-interactive like watching television; but for me we can be alone or with others, but we have to be interacting with each other in some sort of intelligent dialogue.
 - This sort of psychology is useful in marriages, friendships, workplace relationships, and in ministry, because it helps us understand each other and meet each other's relational needs.
- † I have told you all that so I can ask you a silly question: what would we say is Jesus' love language?
- As we will see, Jesus does not connect love with physical touch, gifts, quality time, affirming words, or acts of service. He might want those things from us, but that is not what he says is evidence of our love. Instead, he says, **"If you love me, you will obey my commandments!"**
 - Let's pray and then we will dive into our text to see how Jesus elaborates on this.

[Slide 3: 14.15-17: obey] **John 14.15-17 NET:** [Jesus still speaking to eleven apostles] **"If you love me, you will obey my commandments. Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you."**

- † Jesus says here that if we love him, we will obey his commandments, but next week we will hear him refer to obeying his "word," which is the whole body of his revelation, including everything he spoke and the example he lived. So we show love to Jesus by actively trying to become like Jesus, to adopt his attitudes, to adopt his priorities, to adopt his way of life; to follow his commandments, to follow his example, and to follow his beliefs.
- Of course, we can accomplish this only by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, as he sanctifies [or purifies] us to become more like Christ, more like the image of God we were created and saved to be. But we have seen that God asks us to participate in certain means by which he brings this transforming grace, and those means include submission to Christ as the Lord of our lives, submission that brings about obedience.

- So if we want to show love to Jesus, we must seek to truly follow him. And if we are not trying to follow him – if we willfully disobey or [what might apply to more of us here] if we simply neglect to learn what he wants or we neglect to do what he asks – then he says we do not really love him. That requires a prayerful response by you this week!

† **[Slide 4: love to blessing]** As we read last week, Jesus had just told them that he would work through believers to further the gospel mission in an even bigger way than he had done on his own.

- Jesus told the apostles he would grant whatever they might ask “in his name,” whatever they asked that was according to his will, by his authority, by his direction, and for his glory. If they were submitted to him and walking as he walked, then they would pursue the gospel mission and ask for help in that mission, and Jesus would grant those requests made “in his name.”
- Now, Jesus extends that thought by connecting love and obedience. Only if we truly love Jesus, will we be living in his name, truly pursuing a life that follows Jesus moment by moment, pursuing a lifestyle that derives from submitting to Christ and yielding to the Holy Spirit. Such love for Jesus will lead to obedience – to following Jesus in every way – and that obedience will lead to pursuit of the gospel mission and thus praying for that mission in Christ’s name.

† **[Slide 5: empowerment]** Ok... Jesus knows none of this happens by our own power, for even after our salvation experience we still have a corrupted nature, weak flesh, and decades of learned wrong thought patterns and behavior. So Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to be with believers forever and to empower them. If we love him, we will obey, and will receive the Holy Spirit’s empowerment.

- This is not to suggest that we “buy” or “earn” the gift: we are talking about essential relationships; we cannot bring glory to God or ask in Christ’s name, if we are not relationally connected to them in love and walking intimately with them in the light.
- Anyone who really believes and trusts in Christ receives the Holy Spirit, but if we really believe and thus receive, then we will experience transformation over time and thus grow both in our love for Jesus and in our obedience to his commands.

† **[Slide 6: another paraclete]** We are talking today about God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If you have any questions about the identity and relationship of these three who are one God, we have a good teaching on those questions, so please let me know and I will give it to you.

† Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a “paraclete” [or παράκλητος in Greek]. There is no adequate English term for translation. Our English Bibles use “Advocate,” “Helper,” “Counselor,” or “Comforter.” All of these are true meanings, but not the full meaning. The idea in Greek is that the Holy Spirit empowers believers, that the Holy Spirit strengthens, encourages, exhorts, aids, and transforms believers.

- Actually Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “another paraclete.” Jesus had been empowering the apostles, but now he was leaving, so after he ascended to Heaven he would empower them through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does not replace Christ, but acts as Christ’s emissary, carrying out the gospel mission in the Son’s name, just as the Son carried it out in the Father’s name.

† The apostles already knew the Spirit, because they had experienced his presence as he remained with them to help them believe and endure in Christ. They would know him even better when Christ asked the Father to formally send the Spirit to indwell believers.

- In contrast, the unbelieving world cannot receive the Spirit, cannot accept him or recognize his authority, because it does not experientially know him or even perceive him in the midst of its sinful rebellion against God.

[Slide 7: 14.18-20] John 14.18-20: [Jesus still speaking] **“I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.”**

- † Jesus would not abandon them to be helpless, without a spiritual Father. He would return to them after his resurrection and then send to them the Holy Spirit when he ascended to Heaven.
 - The Spirit would empower and guide them on Earth, while Christ interceded and advocated for them in Heaven. When they prayed in the name of Jesus, Jesus would answer through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- † In his resurrection, Jesus lives, and thus the apostles can too, through his accomplishment of defeating sin, death, and evil, through his accomplishment of appeasing God the Father’s wrath about their sin and reconciling them with God, and through his return to Heaven when he would send the Spirit to regenerate and empower them.
 - When the apostles witnessed the resurrected Christ and then received the empowering Holy Spirit, they finally had their faith perfected, and truly could grasp that Jesus is the divine Son, in total unity with God the Father.
 - And they finally could grasp that they would remain in unity with Christ himself, that their spiritual life, eternal life, was true and forever. Now they would enjoy the New Covenant promises of character transformation and freedom from sin.
- † Jesus spoke these words specifically to the apostles – they would physically see him after the resurrection – but there are applications for us.
 - We also are not abandoned as orphans, for we also can experience true spiritual life through the resurrected Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit he sent.
 - While we cannot observe the resurrected Christ in the same way the apostles did, we can be reborn in spirit, transformed in character, and empowered to do the work and will of Christ, and thus we can perceive his reality, his divine identity, and his intimacy with us.

[Slide 8: 14.21-24] John 14.21-24: [Jesus still speaking] **“The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.” “Lord,” Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.”**

- † We have learned in this gospel that God chooses us and Christ extends grace and love which transforms us so that we can obey and love them. In other words, divine love causes our obedience, so the idea here obviously is not that our obedience causes their love.

- No, God’s love and grace cause transformation in us, which leads us to love Christ and thus to obey him. Here Jesus says that those of us who truly believe and experience such transformation can be secure in permanence of the love of both the Father and the Son.
 - Part of that love is for the Son to reveal himself to the believer. This was graphically true in the post-resurrection period, when Jesus physically appeared to the apostles and other believers, and explained himself more clearly and fully to them. It also is true for disciples today in a spiritual sense, as we experience the reality of Christ and an intimate relationship with him.
- † Jesus mentioned earlier that he was leaving to prepare for them dwelling places in the Father’s house, to make provision for them to have eternal life with the Father and the Son. Now he said believers who loved and obeyed him would have the Father and Son dwelling with them.
- We know we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, so Augustine taught that we have incredible unity and intimacy with the entirety of the triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - Another view is that this looks ahead to the time of the Messianic Kingdom. The prophecy in **Revelation 21.3 NET** says in that kingdom **“The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.”**
 - So we enjoy the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit now, which assures us of the ongoing love of the Father and the Son, and thus we can look forward to a physical intimacy with them after our resurrection, which reflects the spiritual intimacy we have now.

† **[Slide 9: Judas]** Before this part of the discussion occurred, Judas Iscariot left to betray Jesus. The Judas with a question here is another apostle, called “Judas the son of James” by Luke in his gospel [6.16] and his book of Acts [1.13], and called “Thaddaeus” by Matthew [10.3] and Mark [3.18].

- The apostles were expecting Jesus to establish the Messianic Kingdom right then, with great splendor and a time of judgment on the nations, so Judas was wondering how this could come about without Jesus revealing himself to the world and without the world perceiving Jesus.
- It sounds like Jesus is not answering the question, but we will see that the rest of this passage is the complex answer. We will talk more about that in a moment.
- For now we can note that a sense of duty or obligation cannot bring us all the way to obedience, only love for Jesus can do that. So those without a faith-based, saving relationship with Jesus will not grow to love him and thus obey him, and so they will not experience his self-revelation.

[Slide 10: 14.25-26] **John 14.25-26:** [Jesus still speaking] **“I have spoken these things while staying with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.”**

- † We might call the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of truth” as in v.17, because he embodies truth as a member of the triune God. But perhaps Jesus used this name specifically because of the role the Spirit would have to communicate the truth of Christ to the apostles. As we read last week, Jesus just had said that he was the truth of God – the true revelation of God – and the Spirit will bear witness to Jesus.
- † Jesus spoke these words specifically to the apostles. He was speaking these things while with them, before his crucifixion.

- He told the apostles that the Spirit would teach them all they needed to know, specifically the Spirit would remind them of all which Jesus had said to them, so they could fully understand his revelation in the light of the resurrection, and accurately write the New Testament. This is culturally Hebrew parallelism, where the second statement elaborates on the first: The Spirit will teach them everything, specifically he will cause them to remember what Jesus had said.
- It was not John's goal to explain how his readers might be taught by the Spirit, but to explain why his readers could trust that the apostles came to an accurate and full understanding about Christ and were trustworthy to write the New Testament as revelation from God himself.
- This is not even about the apostles receiving new revelation as such, but about inspiring the apostles to comprehend the revelation of Christ they already had received.
- I am not suggesting that the Spirit does not guide us today, I think he does, but I am saying that this passage does not speak to that type of guidance. People often misinterpret these verses by taking them out of context, so we need to be careful that we understand what Jesus said. This passage is about the Spirit empowering the apostles to understand Christ well enough to write the New Testament and set up the church with correct doctrine about Christ.

[Slide 11: 14.27] John 14.27: [Jesus still speaking] **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage.”**

† Jesus spoke these words specifically to the apostles, but they apply to us as well.

† **[Slide 12: Isaiah]** When Jesus returns and is reigning on David's throne, he will bring peace to the entire world.

- **Isaiah 9.6-7 NET says, For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called: Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His dominion will be vast and he will bring immeasurable prosperity. He will rule on David's throne and over David's kingdom, establishing it and strengthening it by promoting justice and fairness, from this time forward and forevermore. The LORD's intense devotion to his people will accomplish this.**

† **[Slide 13: Romans 5]** Right then, Jesus was about to bring the apostles peace with God through his sacrifice on the cross.

- **Romans 5.1-2 NET: Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of God's glory.**
- So we see that we too enjoy this peace with God when we accept Christ in faith.

† **[Slide 14: Romans 15]** Having true relational peace with God, we can have true peace inside.

- First, since we know Christ died for us and rose again, we can feel peace because we have assurance that all is right between us and God and that our salvation is secure and permanent.
- Second, since Christ upon reaching Heaven would send the Holy Spirit to indwell believers, we can experience the fruit of the Spirit, which includes peace.
- **Romans 15.13 NET: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- † **[Slide 15: Philippians]** There also is peace that comes by trusting the will of God and Christ.
- As we read last week in **John 14.1 NET**, Jesus told his apostles, **“Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God; believe also in me.”**
 - Decades later, Paul wrote to the Philippians in **Philippian 4.6-7 NET: Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**
 - If we give our cares to God and trust that he knows what he is doing and has our best interests at heart, then we can have inner peace even when our lives seem to be falling apart.
- † By the same token, if peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit and comes from trusting in God’s will, then we find peace when we submit to Christ, yield to the Holy Spirit, conform to God’s will, and seek to walk in his light, i.e. to be obedient, no matter what, and trust him with the results. That is top line thinking! If you are unsure what I mean by that, come ask after the service!
- This intimacy with Christ, this alignment of ourselves with him, this absolute trust in him, this yielding to the Spirit, all will conspire to bring us a sense of peace inside.

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- † **[Slide 16: Jeremiah 6.13-15]** I believe God is not happy with individuals or churches or nations who try to promote a sense of inner peace or political stability without facing our fundamental issues. This is just new age positive thinking at best, and sometimes even a whitewash cover up.
- Let’s look at a prophecy in **Jeremiah 6.13-15 NET: [God speaking] “Prophets and priests alike, all of them practice deceit. They offer only superficial help for the harm my people have suffered. They say, ‘Everything will be all right!’ But everything is not all right! Are they ashamed because they have done such shameful things? No, they are not at all ashamed. They do not even know how to blush! So they will die, just like others have died. They will be brought to ruin when I punish them,” says the LORD.**

- † **[Slide 17: Jeremiah 6.16]** Nobody can bring about true peace except God. The world cries out for peace and sometimes offers peace, but cannot give it, because the world is in rebellion against God, in conflict with God, and out of tune with the ways of God, suffering with a sin-corrupted wisdom.
- **Jeremiah continued in 6.16 NET: The LORD said to his people: “You are standing at the crossroads. So consider your path. Ask where the old, reliable paths are. Ask where the path is that leads to blessing and follow it. If you do, you will find rest for your souls.”**
 - We are to choose the top line path!
 - So as a church, we do not send you out feeling happy and good about yourselves by offering a message comprised of only part of God’s truth or of new age positive thinking, philosophy, or other human ideas; rather we send you out joyful and feeling good about your place in Christ by offering you the full revelation of God which brings peace with God and thus inner peace.

[Slide 18: 14.28-29] **John 14.28-29: [Jesus still speaking] “You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.”**

- † Let's tackle the big issue first. Jesus is fully divine, so he and God the Father are equal in the sense of being unified in essence. But the Son of God always submits to the will of the Father, which is easy because they are unified in character and will also. Thus Jesus could say the Father is greater, because the Father has a greater position of authority.
 - Furthermore, as the divine Son walked the earth as the man Jesus, he always was clear in his submissive obedience to the Father, even to the point of his sacrificial death on the cross.
- † Multiple times in this dialogue, Jesus says he is telling them all this on his last night of life so that their faith will be preserved when he dies on the cross. The apostles do believe in Jesus, but when events unfold over the next few days, these words will echo in their minds and cause them to increase in their trust in Jesus and broaden their understanding of him.
- † Jesus has already explained that his departure will be a blessing for them, but even if they cannot see this yet, they should be happy for him. Jesus is returning home to Heaven where he belongs, to the glory he had with God the Father before the world began.
 - The apostles were more worried about themselves than about what would please Jesus or God the Father. How often do we repeat this mistake in our day to day lives? How often do we beg them for what we desire, but not for empowerment to carry out their will?

[Slide 19: 14.30-31] John 14.30-31: [Jesus still speaking] **"I will not speak with you much longer, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I am doing just what the Father commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Get up, let us go from here."**

- † Jesus calls Satan "the ruler of this world." People were supposed to rule the Earth as God's representatives, but through our sinfulness we neglected this duty and allowed Satan to dominate.
 - One aspect of the Son of God's mission is to defeat Satan and the forces of evil, and restore mankind's representative rule over a renewed Earth. This will come to complete fulfillment when Jesus returns to rule in God's name from the throne of David.
- † At this time, Satan was coming in the sense that he was guiding Judas Iscariot through the process of betraying Jesus to the Jewish religious authorities who opposed him.
 - Jesus was sinless and divine, so Satan had no hold over him, no power over him. Yet Jesus would die through the evil work of Satan, because that would fulfill God the Father's plan.
 - Jesus will die to prove his love for the Father by perfectly obeying the Father. Just as our obedience proves our love for him, his obedience proves his love for the Father.
- † Remember Judas the son of James had asked a question about what had changed. The apostles were expecting Jesus to establish the Messianic kingdom right then, but Jesus now was revealing God the Father's plan for him to die for their sins and delay the establishment of the kingdom. He will allow Satan to make his play, and then he will fulfill God the Father's plan to defeat Satan and make provision for the salvation or redemption of the planet and all who would believe.

Conclusion

- † **[Slide 20: summary]** Let's summarize before we pray. If we put our faith in Jesus as the divine Son of God who came to earth as a man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and reconcile us with God, and then rose from the grave on the third day, then we receive the Holy Spirit to indwell us.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to have assurance of our unity with Christ and salvation through Christ, to love Christ, to obey Christ, and to carry out the mission of Christ, which brings Christ to reveal himself even more fully to us.
 - Our peace with God through Christ, our submissive obedience to Christ and walk in relational intimacy with Christ, our growing sense of depending on Christ and trusting Christ, and our anticipation of the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom of Christ all will bring us to a miraculous level of inner peace.
 - Faith leads to love, which leads to obedience, which leads to the blessing of inner peace. Let's pray...